Attachment 7
Program Preferences

7.1 Project 1. Drought Relief through Stormwater Diversion for Water Supply

The project contained in this proposal addresses the Assembly Bill (AB) 685, The Human Right to Water, by protecting critical water supply and water quality needs of a disadvantaged community (DAC) within the Greater Monterey County Region. This disadvantaged community is the community of Castroville in the northern portion of the region, with water service provided by Castroville Community Services District (CCSD). The project will reduce irrigation well pumping from the 180/400-foot aquifer thus helping to ensure safe, clean, affordable and accessible drinking water for the community of Castroville. The project will meet this Program Preference fully and with 100% certainty.

7.1.1 Include regional projects or programs (CWC §10544)

This project will increase water supplies for beneficial use through the use of stormwater management, conjunctive water management, and water recycling. In addition, the project will improve water quality, including matching water quality to water use, wastewater treatment, water pollution prevention, and management of urban and agricultural runoff.

7.1.2 Statewide Priority: Drought Preparedness

This project effectively addresses long-term drought preparedness by contributing to sustainable water supply and reliability during water shortages. The proposal will meet this Program Preference fully and with 100% certainty. This project promotes conjunctive use, reuse, and recycling. The project will essentially put urban runoff to beneficial use, and will help increase regional water supply by offsetting agricultural pumping from groundwater supplies in the seawater-impacted coastal zone.

7.1.3 Statewide Priority: Use and Reuse Water More Efficiently

The project involves capturing, treating, and using reclaimed urban stormwater runoff for a higher and more beneficial use, i.e., agricultural irrigation, thus providing a "new" source of water. Future projects of this nature could potentially divert and treat a large percentage of stormwater runoff in the City of Salinas.

7.1.4 Statewide Priority: Climate Change Response Actions

The project will use and reuse water more efficiently. In addition, the project will utilize the natural treatment process of soil filtration, which is environmentally friendly and results in fewer GHG emissions. Furthermore, this project will reduce the need for pumping, and therefore lower energy consumption.

7.1.5 Statewide Priority: Expand Environmental Stewardship

The Salinas River, which has been designated as critical habitat for federally threatened steelhead, has the most 303(d) listed impairments of any water body on the Central Coast. The proposed project expands environmental stewardship by preventing nonpoint source pollutants from urban neighborhoods in the City of Salinas from entering the Salinas River and the federally protected Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. This project will help provide a cleaner and healthier environment for aquatic species. The project will meet this Program Preference fully and with 100% certainty.

7.1.6 Statewide Priority: Protect Surface Water and Groundwater Quality

As noted above, this project will help protect the Salinas River and underlying aquifers from pollutants in urban dry weather runoff. The project will improve the health of surface waters and groundwater, and will benefit aquatic species. The project will meet this Program Preference fully and with 100% certainty.

7.1.7 Statewide Priority: Ensure Equitable Distribution of Benefits

The proposed project is designed to divert stormwater from South Salinas to provide more water to the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP). CSIP operates to prevent seawater contamination of the groundwater aquifer that serves CCSD. This project will provide a new water source to growers to alleviate strains on the groundwater supply, thus protecting CCSD's threatened drinking water source, the 400-Foot aquifer. The project will reduce drought impacts for CCSD and reduce irrigation well pumping from the 180/400-foot aquifer thus helping to ensure safe, clean, affordable and accessible drinking water to the DAC. The project will meet this Program Preference fully and with 100% certainty.